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Montana's State Plan for Adult Education and Family Literacy

Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998

**Program Year 2001 through Program Year 2004
(July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2004)**

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INTRODUCTION

This is a very important and exciting time for Adult Basic Education and Literacy in Montana. The new Workforce Investment Act of 1998, including Title II- Adult and Family Literacy Act of 1998, provides a tremendous opportunity to address the very important needs of adult learners in a manner which will offer them economic opportunity into the next century.

Montana submitted a Transitional One-Year State Plan for Adult Basic Education and Family Literacy for program year 2000. This transitional plan allowed the state agency to fully cooperate with the new state workforce development planning process. The transitional plan is the foundation for establishing a progressive system of Adult Basic Education and Literacy in Montana. During the transitional year, activity focused on assisting the state agency to determine the direction of Montana's state plan for years two through five.

This document is Montana's State Plan for years two through five. The intent and focus of Adult Basic Education programs continues to define the role of education within a Workforce Development System. This plan provides the direction and leadership for local programs and the state agency, to assure that the role of education is meaningful, visible, and accountable.

Table of Contents

1.0	Adult Education and Family Literacy Act	1
1.1	Certifications	1
1.2	Assurances	1
2.0	Needs Assessment	3
2.1	Individuals Most in Need	4
2.2	Populations	4
3.0	Description of Montana Adult Education and Literacy Activities	8
3.1	Description of Allowable Activities	8
3.2	Special Rule	9
3.3	Descriptions of New Organizational Relationships	9
4.0	Annual Evaluation of Adult Education and Literacy Activities	10
4.1	Annual Evaluations	10
5.0	Performance Measures	11
5.1	Eligible Agency Performance Measures	11
5.2	Optional-Additional Indicators	11
5.3	Performance Measures Worksheet	12
6.0	Procedures for Funding Eligible Providers	17
6.1	Applications	17
6.2	Eligible Providers	19
6.3	Notice of Availability	19
6.4	Process	20
6.5	Evaluations of Applications	21
6.6	Special Rule	22
7.0	Public Participation and Comment	22
7.1	Description of Activities	22
7.2	Governor's Comments	23
8.0	Program Strategies to Serve Populations Most in Need of Literacy Services	24
9.0	Integration with Other Adult Education and Training	25
9.1	Description of Planned Integrated Activities	25
9.2	State Unified Plan	25
10.0	Description of Steps to Ensure Direct and Equitable Access	26
10.1	Description of Steps	26
10.2	Notice of Availability	27
11.0	Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals	27
11.1	Types of Programs	27
11.2	Priority	28
11.3	Types of Institutional Settings	28
12.0	Description of Proposed State Leadership Activities	28
12.1	Description of Activities	28
12.2	Description of Joint Planning and Coordination for Unified Plan Only	29
12.3	Description of Activities Under Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)	29
12.4	29
Appendix A—Core Indicators of Performance and Outcome Measures Definitions		
Appendix B—Needs Assessment Information and Montana Map		
Appendix C—Organizational Charts for OPI, WIA Implementation and the Workforce System		

1.0

United States Department of Education
Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
Enacted August 7, 1998 as Title II of the
Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-220)

The Office of Public Instruction of the State of Montana hereby submits its completed Five-Year State plan to be effective until June 30, 2004. The eligible agency also assures that this plan, which serves as an agreement between State and Federal Governments under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, will be administered in accordance with applicable Federal laws and regulations, including the following certifications and assurances:

1.1 Certifications

Education Department General
Administrative Regulations
(34 CFR Part 76.104)

- (1) The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan.
- (2) The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program.
- (3) The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan.
- (4) All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law.
- (5) A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan.
- (6) The State officer who submits the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan.
- (7) The agency that submits the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan.
- (8) The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program.

1.2 Assurances

Workforce Investment Act of 1998
(Public Law 105-220)

[Section 224(b) (5), (6), and (8)]

1. The eligible agency will award not less than one grant to an eligible provider who offers flexible schedules and necessary support services (such as child care and transportation) to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities, or individuals with other special needs, to participate in adult education and literacy activities, which eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with support services that are not provided under this subtitle prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities provided under this subtitle for support services.
2. Funds received under this subtitle will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities under this subtitle.

3. The eligible agency will expend the funds under this subtitle in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements in Section 241.

Sec. 241. Administrative Provisions

(a) Supplement Not Supplant.--Funds made available for adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle shall supplement and not supplant other State or local public funds expended for adult education and literacy activities.

(b) Maintenance of Effort.--

(1) In general.--

(A) Determination.--An eligible agency may receive funds under this subtitle for any fiscal year if the Secretary finds that the fiscal effort per student or the aggregate expenditures of such eligible agency for adult education and literacy activities, in the second preceding fiscal year, was not less than 90 percent of the fiscal effort per student or the aggregate expenditures of such eligible agency for adult education and literacy activities, in the third preceding fiscal year.

(B) Proportionate reduction.--Subject to paragraphs (2), (3), and (4), for any fiscal year with respect to which the Secretary determines under subparagraph (A) that the fiscal effort or the aggregate expenditures of an eligible agency for the preceding program year were less than such effort or expenditures for the second preceding program year, the Secretary--

(i) shall determine the percentage decreases in such effort or in such expenditures; and

(ii) shall decrease the payment made under this subtitle for such program year to the agency for adult education and literacy activities by the lesser of such percentages.

(2) Computation.--In computing the fiscal effort and aggregate expenditures under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall exclude capital expenditures and special one-time project costs.

(3) Decrease in federal support.--If the amount made available for adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle for a fiscal year is less than the amount made available for adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle for the preceding fiscal year, then the fiscal effort per student and the aggregate expenditures of an eligible agency required in order to avoid a reduction under paragraph (1)(B) shall be decreased by the same percentage as the percentage decrease in the amount so made available.

(4) Waiver.--The Secretary may waive the requirements of this subsection for 1 fiscal year only, if the Secretary determines that a waiver would be equitable due to exceptional or uncontrollable circumstances, such as a natural disaster or an unforeseen and precipitous decline in the financial resources of the State or outlying area of the eligible agency. If the Secretary grants a waiver under the preceding sentence for a fiscal year, the level of effort required under paragraph (1) shall not be reduced in the subsequent fiscal year because of the waiver.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

State Agency

Address

By: _____
Signature of Agency Head

Title

2.0 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This section provides an overview of the key population groups that require services from Montana's adult education system, and the capacity of adult education programs in Montana to provide necessary services. It is based on findings of a study conducted by members of the staff at Montana State University titled, "Needs and Models for A New Era, An Assessment of the Needs for Adult Basic Education and Literacy in Montana and Recommendations Based on the Assessment." The information was gathered from relevant data from existing state, regional, and national studies; focus groups with practitioners; questionnaires sent to key players in adult basic education and literacy during the months of March through November 1998; and student intake data from local programs, collected during the first half of program year 2000.

Two focus group and two regional teleconferences were conducted with specific questions to which participants responded. Two of the focus groups were held at sites with adult basic education programs. The first focus group was held in Polson in western Montana and included individuals from several Indian reservations, literacy providers, adult basic education instructors and administrators. The second focus group was held in Billings, drawing participants from that area of the state. The regional teleconferences were conducted using MetNet, Montana's system of interactive classrooms connecting sites in Bozeman, Miles City, and Glendive in one focus group; Helena, Havre, and Great Falls at the other site.

The specific areas that were examined included professional development needs and program standards, learner outcomes and funding issues. The results were analyzed; then relevant information from existing studies was incorporated. Finally, public meetings were held to discuss the recommendations before finalizing the results of the assessment and the recommendations. As programs began working with their local management teams, additional curriculum needs developed. Instruction in basic and workplace education needed to focus more on communication skills, problem solving ability, and critical thinking in addition to the reading, writing and computational skills that had been taught previously. Basic technology skills, the ability to work in teams, and the skill of learning how to learn should be stressed.

The addition of student focused data taken from intake interviews at the local program level provided information to programs about student expectation and reason for enrolling in the program.

Participants indicated their short-term or learning goals were the following:

Earning a GED	72%
Acquiring Basic Skills	11%
Computer Literacy	4%
ESL	5%

Participants indicated the following long-term goals:

Employment	41%
Additional Education	38%
Other	23%

Of those who indicated "Other" as a long-term goal, the following were specified: personal growth, acquiring a Commercial Drivers License, quality time with family, career exploration, finding better employment, and interest in technology.

Participants were assessed for program placement by using the TABE, and 38 percent tested at Level I, while 20 percent tested at Level II.

It is clear that in Montana, the priority for programs is to increase the basic skills level of program participants in support of their potential to earn a GED as a means to employment and further education.

After further analysis, it was determined that the addition of student needs data to this plan along with the results of the MSU Provider study would be sufficient to provide a comprehensive picture for determining the Adult Basic Education priorities for the state.

At this time the Office of Public Instruction is submitting the remaining four years of a five-year plan for Adult Education and Family Literacy. There is no indication that Montana will be submitting a state Unified Plan.

2.1 INDIVIDUALS MOST IN NEED

According to the Synthetic Estimates of Literacy, 13 percent of the adult population of Montana is at NALS LEVEL 1, and 39 percent of the population is at Level 1 or 2 (on the National Adult Survey or NALS). In 1997, the Office of Research and Analysis found that the population of Montana was estimated at 878,800 people. This reflects a slight growth consistent with current trends, with most of the growth in the western part of the state. According to the statistics provided by the Office of Public Instruction, Division of Adult and Vocational Education, the number of participants who entered at the literacy level or at the adult basic education level has increased the last three years from 3,639 participants to 4,248.

Volunteer literacy programs used other resources to provide literacy instruction to more than 751 additional adult students during 1998. The number of students served by programs not receiving ABE funds underscores the need for additional services for those at the lowest literacy level.

The poverty level in Montana as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau stated that 22 percent of the population under 18 lived in poverty in July of 1996, and 19.1 related children lived in families in poverty, with 30 percent of people under age 5 in poverty. The median household income during this time was estimated to be \$27,889, which was a decrease from the \$28,044 median income in 1989.

2.2 POPULATIONS

Unemployed or public assistance recipients

Local programs are responsible for developing effective and appropriate instructional activities for the target population identified through a community planning process that ensures that there will

be no duplication of services and that will guarantee maximum access to that target population. The local program planning must also include provision for referral to supportive services for childcare and transportation, or other access to services.

Montana ranks 13th in the nation for overall poverty according to the U.S. Census Bureau, with almost 16 percent of the 878,800 people living in poverty. Approximately 93 percent of the population is white, 6 percent Native American, and 1 percent is Asian and other minorities. The Native American population is primarily found on or near the reservations, and the Asian population is concentrated in one place in western Montana.

Recent trends show that there is an increased participation in adult education classes, a trend that will continue as more people on public assistance are mandated to seek employment. Therefore, there will be a greater demand for skill enhancement, including computer literacy as well as other family and workplace literacy skills. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program has been implemented in Montana for over two years, so many of the more highly skilled people have found jobs, gone on to higher education, or left the state. Now we are left with harder to serve individuals who have multiple barriers to success. In addition, according to the Synthetic Estimate of Literacy, 52 percent of the Welfare/TANF population has just a high school or equivalency diploma, and that many of these individuals are lacking in the basic skills necessary to perform effectively in the workplace. The high school drop-out rate for the 1996-97 school year was 5.5 percent, with the drop-out rate for grades 7 and 8 at 0.6 percent. The two groups together totaled nearly 2,900 students who will be potential enrollees in ABE, ASE, or literacy programs.

These individuals are most often characterized by low literacy level (ABE levels 1 and 2), low income, and usually one other factor that can keep them from fulfilling their roles as workers, family, and community members. Nineteen percent of Montana residents have less than a high school diploma or equivalent. Of those, only 59 percent are employed, and only 27 percent are employed at professional, technical, or managerial levels. The remaining 32 percent are employed in sales, service or laboring jobs.

Wages in Montana are among the lowest in the nation. Due, in part, to the agricultural emphasis in the eastern part of the state, the preponderance of part-time, service-oriented employment in the western part, and the challenges of economic development in a state where economy is built on a foundation of agriculture, extractive industries, and tourism. Thirteen of the 56 counties in the state are classed as labor surplus areas with an average unemployment rate of 6.4 percent or greater. The average unemployment rate in Montana is 5.4 percent, which is slightly above the national average. The statistics for public assistance recipients state that 5,297 cases were current. According to statistics from the Office of Public Instruction, Adult Education Division, during the 1997-1998 program year 3,375 individuals who were unemployed or not in the labor force were served, and 1,236 who receive public assistance were also served by existing programs.

In partnership with the state TANF agency during program years 2000 and 2001, local programs have access to supplemental Adult literacy funding using available TANF incentive funds. This funding is provided as a supplement to local programs to enable them to better support the extensive needs that many TANF recipients express. These funds are used to aid in diagnosis of learning disabilities and to provide resources for additional courses on short-term work-related skills, which include learning how to learn and technology skill development. The continuation of this funding

source is uncertain. The state agency will continue to monitor and advocate for the continued availability of TANF supplemental funding as well as other possible sources.

Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities include 13 percent who have a work disability according to the Synthetic Estimates of Literacy. Adult basic education and literacy programs work with persons who are developmentally disabled, physically handicapped, and learning disabled. Five hundred and sixty-six disabled adults were served during the 1997-1998 year. This population is often difficult to accommodate in existing programs because of a lack of resources for diagnosing the specific learning disability, accommodations needed, and the capacity for learning new tasks.

Because of expressed need from the field of practitioners, the state agency has determined that assisting local program providers with professional development opportunities to better meet the needs of the learning disabled population is a priority. A task force has been formed to develop a strategic plan to address learning disability issues. The goal of the task force is to create and implement strategies for local programs that serve the learning disabled. Members of this task force attended the Bridges to Practice training in Washington, D.C., and will provide training to the field of practitioners during the Summer Institute and at the state meeting in the fall. Other professional development activities will be ongoing and tailored to best meet the needs of practitioners.

In order to properly assess and diagnose disabilities, programs often use the services of their local Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services, work with intensive case managers from sheltered workshops or with other public and private services that work with the cognitively and physically disabled individuals. Approximately 22,000 people have a disability that prevents them from work activity, and an additional 20,500 are currently in the work force.

Other Populations

Workplace skills improvement programs are focused primarily on serving displaced homemakers, single heads of households and public assistance recipients through cooperative agreements with agency partners. The Adult Basic Education programs provide individualized assessment and goal setting for participants with the primary focus on building skills for the workplace, self-sufficiency, and family literacy improvement.

In addition to the previously mentioned topics, local programs also offer English language instruction to those whose primary language is not English, citizenship preparation, instruction leading to a high school equivalency diploma, and basic skills using the computer.

Several programs offer special services to the homeless adult population at homeless shelters, while other programs serve that population in their learning centers or through local volunteer tutor groups. Many of the homeless population in Montana do not fit the stereotype of the wanderer; instead, they are often local people who have lost their shelter because they could no longer afford it.

Services for Single Parents and Displaced Homemakers

Montana currently leads the 50 states of the nation in the *rate of increase* in poverty, currently 17 percent of the population. Of all Montanans living in deep poverty (at or below the 50 percent of the

official poverty line), 56 percent live in female-headed households. Welfare reform has increased the number of females heading households that are seeking services from ABE programs. The welfare recipients that ABE programs are seeing are also those with multiple barriers in need of more intensive services. All ABE programs provide services to Single Parents and Displaced Home-makers. Many programs are offered as part of a recipient's individual employment or training plan, and in coordination with local and state welfare reform programs.

Services to Native Americans

Five out of seven of Montana's Indian Reservations have poverty rates in excess of 45 percent. Native American learners and issues will be a part of Montana's needs assessment, and will be certainly served with federal AEFLA funds. The State is in the early stages of developing a process for Tribal ABE programs to become successful at coordinating and collaborating with community partners to develop local strategic plans for providing ABE to the reservation community. Since the loss of direct federal ABE funds to Tribes in 1996, the State of Montana has taken a very active role in assuring that Tribal ABE programs have access to federal funds.

The state's agenda over the next five years will be to provide technical assistance for grant writing, and assistance with community partnership development and coordination projects to assist tribal communities to better leverage resources and rebuild ABE programs on the reservations.

Meeting Rural Needs

Montana is a vastly rural and remotely isolated state. Rural is a given. Transportation and access to services is a perpetual problem for ABE. However, Montana's ABE providers go to great lengths to provide service to outlying areas in a county, or to provide services to many counties within a given region. As the state becomes more advanced technologically, it will become easier and more cost efficient to provide ABE services to the state's most isolated communities. Currently, many ABE instructors travel to outlying communities to provide classes, tutoring and support services to adult learners. There is also interest in how to best use the technology that is currently available, such as MetNet teleconferencing services, conference telephoning, and the Internet.

Montana will always have disproportionate expenses due to our rural nature. Though every attempt and consideration is given to costs, it is very difficult to provide widely available services to such a large area without the expenses related to travel and technology.

Corrections

During the 1997-1998 year, 1,249 criminal offenders were served. Participants were served in jails and pre-release centers. Montana is currently expanding the prison system to include regional prisons, which may have an impact on the number of incarcerated individuals who can be served. Participants in drug and alcohol treatment programs, house-arrest programs, and in day-treatment centers are also served.

Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA-1998) - Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Section 225, states that local providers must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional facility within five years of participation in the program.

Montana's State Plan for adult basic education goes further by giving priority to programs that meet the federal criterion and that emphasize adult basic education services for individuals in local and community corrections programs.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF MONTANA ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES

Descriptions of required local activities should include one or more programs that provide services or instruction in one or more of the following:

- (1) Adult education and literacy services, which may include workplace literacy services (Sec. 203 (18) defines these as “literacy services that are offered for the purpose of improving the productivity of the workforce through the improvement of literacy skills”);
- (2) Family literacy services; and
- (3) English literacy programs [(Sec. 231(b)].

3.1 DESCRIPTION OF ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES

Not less than 82.5 percent of grant funds will be awarded to eligible providers to carry out activities that include teaching of students or the interaction between teachers and students for the purpose of learning. Teaching may be provided for students in a school classroom, a workplace, a home, or in other learning environments.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) includes instruction provided to students of the target population reading at the 0-8.9 grade-level equivalent, determined by standardized testing. There are three levels in Adult Basic Education in Montana. The first includes individuals who enter at the literacy level, 0-1.9; the second includes those entering at 2-5.9; and the third, those who have 6-8.9 grade level equivalents. Instruction is usually offered in a life skills or employability context so that those individuals who lack the skills to function in the family, in society, or the workplace can gain necessary skills to function effectively in those arenas.

Adult Secondary Education (ASE) is offered for those who enter at 9-12.9 grade levels. The General Educational Development Diploma is usually the goal for most of these individuals, although some sites do offer a regular high school diploma. Classes are offered to prepare for the GED five-part examination which enables individuals to demonstrate that they have attained academic skills and concepts equivalent to many high school graduates. In Montana, the majority of people who choose this option do so in order to enter further education.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) offers classes in a life skills or employability context for those whose native language is not English. Instruction will focus on mastery of necessary skills in language, numeracy, computation, and problem solving to enable participants to gain employment and to function in the family and in society.

Family Literacy services will be offered through a variety of providers and in collaboration with Head Start, Even Start, K-12 schools, and other Workforce Development Board partners. Instruction will focus on aiding parents to maximize their own potential, and participate in their children's education through activities that focus on literacy activities with their children; parental literacy which leads to economic self-sufficiency; training parents to become the primary teachers in their child's education process; and age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and in life experience.

Workplace Literacy programs will require that literacy be provided in an employability context to promote job readiness, job retention, and job promotion or advancement. Classes will include career exploration and development activities to link education to training, further education and/or employment. Adult education funds will be provided through linkages with partners in the Workforce Development Boards and in communities and where One-Stop Centers are located.

3.2 SPECIAL RULE

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under Sec. 231 (of AEFLA) shall not use any funds made available under this subtitle for adult education and literacy activities for the purposes of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not individuals described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of Section 231, except that such agency may use funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy services. In providing family literacy services under this subtitle, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this subtitle prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities other than adult education activities.

3.3 DESCRIPTIONS OF NEW ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

During the five years of Montana's State Plan, the state agency responsible for adult basic education will actively work as a partner in Montana's WIA system to assure full cooperation and coordination of adult education services with Workforce Investment Act priorities. The state agency responsible for adult education works cooperatively with the Department of Labor and Industry, Montana Job Training Inc., the Department of Public Health and Human Services, and other agencies and organizations related to Employment, Job Training and Welfare Reform.

It is the intent of the eligible agency to work cooperatively with the WIB during the five years of this State Plan. Montana's completed state plan will be distributed to the members of the State Workforce Investment Board, as well as other appropriate workforce development entities.

4.0 ANNUAL EVALUATION OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES

4.1 ANNUAL EVALUATIONS

The Adult Basic Education program in Montana will continue to evaluate local programs using a yet to be determined data management program which measures information needed for federal reports, in accordance with the National Reporting Standards. In addition, two other evaluation processes will be conducted: an annual self-evaluation for all funded providers, and an on-site evaluation. For the self-evaluation, each provider will submit an assessment of performance measures and individual program goals with an annual expenditure report, and all information stored in the chosen data management system. On-site evaluations will be determined by the number of programs funded and the availability of resources. The eligible agency will continue to explore the evaluation process, with guidance from the field and the State Council for Adult Education and Family Literacy.

Evaluation of local programs will consist of assessing the following areas:

- (1) Compliance with RFP guidelines and applicable laws;
- (2) Program management, scheduling, locations, and staff credentials;
- (3) Outreach, recruitment, and retention practices of the target population;
- (4) Curriculum and instruction, including adaptations for special needs learners;
- (5) Counseling and support services;
- (6) Professional development plans and opportunities;
- (7) Intake, assessment, and documentation procedures;
- (8) Documentation of ability to assist learners to gain employment, achieve self-sufficiency, improve family literacy, and enter further training or education.

Evaluation activities during the transitional year will be used to develop additional baseline data to measure the effectiveness of:

- (1) Teacher training;
- (2) Provider effectiveness;
- (3) Extent to which adult education for the employed, the unemployed, the homeless, individuals with disabilities, displaced homemakers and single parents, incarcerated individuals, welfare recipients, Native Americans, and other specific populations has been met; and
- (4) The use of the results to determine achievement of levels of performance for each of the core indicators for eligible providers.

5.0 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

5.1 ELIGIBLE AGENCY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

A comprehensive performance evaluation system will be established according to guidelines described in Section 212, Performance Accountability System, of the Act. It will be focused on three performance measures: continual progress toward the next step in the literacy continuum; successful completion of a program area; transition to employment following the first job-second job concept; and entry into postsecondary or occupation training. Montana will also develop guidelines for additional Indicators of Program Performance to ensure that local programs will focus on long-term planning and responsiveness to the needs of the community, instead of focusing solely on the current year. The degree to which these performance measures are met will be a focus of the annual evaluation process, both for the self-evaluation process as well as for the on-site visitations.

In order to receive funding for a program year, each potential provider must state the goals for achieving student learning gains, secondary completions, and advancement into postsecondary education or training or employment. The application must also state the process for meeting projected goals. In years 2 through 5 of the Montana State Plan's future funding cycles, incentive funds may be provided for exceeding the projected goals.

Annual performance reports will be submitted to the Secretary on the progress that Montana is making toward meeting performance measures, including information on the core indicators of performance.

Until Montana adopts a common management system for participants who work with multiple agencies, it will be difficult to measure employment, earnings, and entry into a postsecondary education center or entry into a training program other than by self-reporting by the student. This aspect of Montana's Workforce Investment efforts are in a state of development and will be monitored by the state agency for eventual implementation.

.2 OPTIONAL-ADDITIONAL INDICATORS

Optional—additional indicators will be considered for years 2 through 5, based on programmatic needs and related to family literacy.

Levels of Performance for First Three Years

Appendix (A) includes Montana's Core Indicators of Performance for years one through three.

Factors

In preparing proposed levels of performance, the eligible agency shall take into account the following:

- how the levels compare with the eligible agency adjusted levels of performance established for other eligible agencies, taking into account factors including the characteristics of participants who enter the program, and the services and instruction to be provided, and
- the extent to which such levels promote continuous improvement in performance on the performance measures by such eligible agencies to ensure optimal return on the investment of federal funds.

Response:

(1) and (2)—At the time of submission of this state plan, the state of Montana has not entered into the process of determining appropriate levels of performance for participants being served across the spectrum of Workforce Development activities, or how adjusted levels of performance will be managed within the system. Montana is in the very early stages of developing an integrated data management system for accountability and program improvement purposes. It is assumed that the implementation of this integrated system will then allow all the eligible agencies within WIA to compare and analyze the collected data as a means to adjusting levels of performance. It is anticipated the implementation of this system will occur by July 1, 2001. Montana's One-Stop system will be the point of access to all data and information for programs and program participants.

Montana has not yet determined the process to be utilized for applying for an incentive award under WIA.

6.0 PROCEDURES FOR FUNDING ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

This section of Montana's State Plan describes how the eligible agency will fund local activities in accordance with the considerations described in Sec. 231(e). It describes the procedures for submitting applications to the eligible agency and for ensuring direct and equitable access to all eligible providers.

For years two through five, the eligible agency shall award multiple-year grants. New awards may be made in each year except year five, unless the U.S. Department of Education waives the multiple year cycle for year five. The addition of new programs will be considered during off-cycle years if an increase in federal funding occurs during the periods of year three and year four.

All eligible recipients will have direct and equitable access to federal AEFLA funds. Direct and equitable access will be provided by notifying eligible providers of the availability of funds through the following means:

- (1) Eligible providers will be notified of the availability of funds by direct mail to the greatest extent possible.
- (2) Notification of availability of funds will be posted in the state's largest newspapers, including the Missoulian, Billings Gazette, Bozeman Chronicle, Helena Independent Record, Great Falls Tribune, and the Butte Montana Standard.
- (3) Information about fund availability will be posted electronically via MetNet. MetNet is the Montana Office of Public Instruction Internet site.
- (4) The state will hold a series of Technical Assistance workshops to assist eligible applicants in the preparation of an RFP. The RFP workshop schedule will be included in the RFP mailing and other information related to the availability of funds. At a minimum, statewide teleconferencing will be used to provide this technical assistance.
- (5) Additional technical assistance will be provided upon request to the eligible state agency.

6.1 APPLICATIONS

Each eligible provider desiring a grant or contract under AEFLA shall submit an application to the eligible agency containing information and assurances as the agency may require, including:

- (1) A description of how funds awarded under AEFLA will be allocated in accordance with Montana funding priorities; and
- (2) A description of any cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities, including active participation with the grantees local management team responsible for workforce development activities and One-Stop operations; and

(3) A needs assessment is required for all applicants applying for program year 2001-2002 funds. New programs submitting an application in subsequent years will be required to comply with needs assessment requirements in order to receive funds.

Funding Priorities

The state agency has determined that cooperative arrangements at the local level are a priority in the determination of awards. In an effort to provide the needed services with the minimal resources available, the state agency shall give priority to eligible providers that address local efforts at integrating services related to adult education and literacy with the WIA 1998, Welfare Reform and other relevant initiatives.

Priority in approving proposals and in allocating available funds among approved applicants will be given to those that best match the state's priorities. Montana's funding priorities are:

1. Priority in funding applications under the Montana State Plan for Adult and Family Literacy will be given to proposals to serve adults who are most in need of adult and family literacy services;
2. Partnership efforts figure prominently in the Montana State Plan, which stresses the need for partnership as a means to improve the impact of services to learners and to stretch resources as far as they can go.

This RFP focuses on developing coordination and consortia. The focus serves two purposes. First, it fosters relationships in communities that will ensure learners have access to the services they need. These include access to a full range of literacy and basic skills services, support services, job preparation and training, and other educational services and resources in their communities. Second, it promotes representation of the interests of adults with low literacy and basic skills in local planning groups, where decisions made can have a great impact on learner's lives.

Proposals that include arrangements for support services from other partner agencies and organizations in the area. For the purposes of this RFP, coordination is defined as:

Organizations whose activities complement each other and have knowledge of one another's missions, services, and procedures. They use this knowledge to coordinate their efforts and ensure that referrals can be effectively made, services are not unnecessarily duplicated, and that the needs of learners can be met—enabling them to participate and progress in education. Proposals that are submitted as a formal consortium of adult and family literacy providers in the region of the state to be served by the applicant.

For the purpose of this RFP, consortia is defined as:

An alignment of literacy and basic skills providers. In a consortium, the partners have aligned missions, share mutual responsibility for outcomes, and together identify and plan service for adults in their community who are most-in-need of adult and family literacy services. The consortium can choose to have a single fiscal agent or to have money disbursed directly to each partner. In either case, it must be clear what each partner is being compensated for.

3. Proposals that focus on instructional quality, including “Whether the activities provide learning in real-life contexts to ensure that an individual has the skills needed to compete in the workplace and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship,” and “Whether the activities are staffed by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators.”

Appendix (B) includes needs assessment information and the state of Montana map that indicates the possible boundaries for service delivery and partnership.

2.2 ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

To provide adult education and literacy services described in Sec. 231(b) of the Act, the state eligible agency will accept proposals from:

- (1) a local education agency;
- (2) a community-based organization of demonstrated effectiveness;
- (3) a volunteer literacy organization of demonstrated effectiveness;
- (4) an institution of higher education;
- (5) a public or private nonprofit agency;
- (6) a library;
- (7) a public housing authority;
- (8) a nonprofit institution that is not described in any of subparagraphs (1) through (7) and has the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families; and
- (9) a consortium of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in any of subparagraphs (1) through (8).

State Priority

The state agency shall require that eligible providers of existing programs indicate demonstrated effectiveness by addressing past performance in the grant application. New programs will be required to demonstrate program effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services by meeting the established performance indicators negotiated by the eligible state agency with the eligible provider. Future funding for all grantees may be determined by the eligible providers ability to meet performance indicators.

3.3 NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

All eligible recipients will have direct and equitable access to federal AEFLA funds. Direct and equitable access will be provided by notifying eligible providers of the availability of funds through the following means:

- (1) Eligible providers will be notified of the availability of funds by direct mail to the greatest extent possible;
- (2) Notification of availability of funds will be posted in the state’s largest newspapers, including the Missoulian, Billings Gazette, Bozeman Chronicle, Helena Independent Record, Great Falls Tribune, and the Butte Montana Standard; and

(3) Information about fund availability will be posted electronically via MetNet. MetNet is the Montana Office of Public Instruction Internet site.

6.4 PROCESS

The eligible agency will disseminate the Request for Proposal for the period July 1, 2000, through June 30, 2002, in April, following the submission of Montana's completed State Plan to the United States Department of Education, Office of Adult and Vocational Education.

The state agency has determined the following timetable for submission and notice of awards for program year 2001 and 2002:

April 2000	RFPs will be distributed to eligible providers by mail and made available upon request or by accessing MetNet.
May 2000	Technical assistance for eligible providers for writing an application will be provided by the state agency.
June 2000	Applications from eligible providers will be accepted by the determined due date.
June 2000	Applications will be read and scored.
June 2000	Eligible providers will be notified of proposal funding status. All funded eligible providers will enter into negotiations with the state eligible agency.
July 2000	All program year 2001/2002 grants will be awarded.

The state agency has determined the following timetable for submission and notice of awards for program year 2002, 2003, and 2004:

January	RFPs will be distributed to eligible providers by mail and made available upon request or by accessing MetNet.
February	Technical assistance for eligible providers for writing an application will be provided by the state agency.
March	Applications from eligible providers will be accepted by the determined due date.
April	Applications will be read and scored.
April	Eligible providers will be notified of proposal funding status. All funded eligible providers will enter into negotiations with the state eligible agency.
May	All program year 2002/2003/2004 grants will be awarded.

The cycle of funding may be staggered to accommodate increases in the federal basic grant to allow new programs to participate without substantial gaps in ability to apply. All awards will be based on multiple years, and subsequent funding will be determined by the provider's ability to meet performance indicators.

5.5 EVALUATIONS OF APPLICATIONS

In awarding grants or contracts under this Section [231(e)], the eligible provider shall consider:

- (1) The degree to which the eligible provider will establish measurable goals;
- (2) The past effectiveness of an eligible provider in improving literacy skills to adults and families and, after the one-year period beginning with the adoption of an eligible agency's performance measures under Sec. 212 of AEFLA, the success of an eligible provider receiving funding under this subtitle in meeting or exceeding such performance measures, especially with respect to those adults with lower levels of literacy;
- (3) The commitment of the eligible provider to serve individuals in the community who are most in need of literacy services, including individuals who are low-income or have minimal literacy skills;
- (4) Whether or not the program is of sufficient intensity and duration for participants to achieve substantial learning gains and uses instructional practices, such as phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension that research has proven to be effective in teaching individuals to read;
- (5) Whether the activities are built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice;
- (6) Whether the activities effectively employ advances in technology, as appropriate, including the use of computers;
- (7) Whether the activities provide learning in real-life contexts to ensure that an individual has the skills needed to compete in the workplace and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;
- (8) Whether the activities are staffed by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators;
- (9) Whether the activities coordinate with other available resources in the community, such as establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies;
- (10) Whether the activities offer flexible schedules and support services (such as child care and transportation) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;
- (11) Whether the activities maintain a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report participant outcomes and to monitor program performance against the eligible agency performance measures; and
- (12) Whether the local communities have a demonstrated need for additional English literacy programs [Sec. 231(e)].

6.6 SPECIAL RULE

Whenever a state or outlying area implements any rule or policy relating to the administration or operation of a program authorized under AEFLA that has the effect of imposing a requirement that is not imposed under federal law (including any rule or policy based on a state or outlying area interpretation of a federal statute, regulation, or guideline), the state or outlying area shall identify to eligible providers, the rule or policy as being state- or outlying area- imposed.

Eligible providers that demonstrate active cooperative arrangements at the local level may be awarded incentive State Leadership funds, if available, in addition to an eligible provider's basic grant award.

Special Rule: The regional funding strategy has been suggested in an attempt to maintain and create an adult and family literacy presence throughout the state; foster a local and regional fit between services and needs; demonstrate a commitment to direct and equitable access; and ensure continuity of services to existing students. Montana's State Plan has designated 27 regions; however, boundaries are subject to local need and ability to provide the broadest and most intensive services throughout the state. Actual boundaries will be determined at the local and regional level, and the suggested boundaries may overlap within a service delivery area.

In this highly competitive grant process it is anticipated that up to 20 proposals may be awarded.

Special Rule: Minimum award amount for program years 2001 and 2002 (July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2002) is \$20,000 per year. Should the state receive an increase in its federal allocation during the life of this state plan, the priority for additional funds will be used to support programs where adult education and family literacy services are nonexistent or minimal in scope and intensity.

7.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMENT

7.1 DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

The following activities occurred in Montana to allow for and encourage public participation and comment related to development of Montana's State Plan:

- (1) Survey of Montana's ABE and Literacy community resulting in the study, "Needs and Models For a New Era: An Assessment of the Need for Adult Basic Education and Literacy in Montana and Recommendations Based on the Assessment."
- (2) State Plan meeting conducted March 3, 1999, in Helena. Thirty-three participants attended this meeting. Dr. Carroll Towey of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Adult and Vocational Education, provided technical assistance. All representatives of the ABE and Literacy field were invited to attend. Representative of the Department of Labor- Workforce Investment Bureau (includes Workforce Investment Act and One-Stop Centers), Depart-

ment of Public Health and Human Services, postsecondary education, Montana Job Training Partnership, Inc., were also invited to attend.

Montana's Department of Labor and Industry and the Montana Job Training Partnership, Inc., are the state agency and administrative agency responsible for the development of state activities and programs related to workforce development and one-stop systems. All information regarding adult education and family literacy in Montana is provided to each entity for purposes of coordination, review, and comment.

The state agency responsible for adult basic education will actively work as a partner of Montana's WIA system to assure full cooperation and coordination of adult education services with workforce investment act priorities. The state agency responsible for adult education works cooperatively with the Department of Labor and Industry, Montana Job Training Inc., the Department of Public Health and Human Services, and programs and agencies related to Employment, Job Training and Welfare Reform.

The following activities were conducted to provide opportunities for public participation and comment for the completed State Plan:

- (1) Copies of the final state plan were sent by mail to all stakeholders and eligible recipients to the greatest extent possible; and
- (2) Opportunities to review and comment on Montana's State Plan were provided through the internet via MetNet. Comments on the state plan will be accepted in writing or through electronic communication via the Internet.

All state requirements for developing a state plan were met.

1.2 GOVERNOR'S COMMENTS

Montana's State Plan was submitted to the Governor for comment and review. Comments provided by the Governor will be submitted under separate cover along with comments from interested individuals as well as the response from the state agency.

8.0 PROGRAM STRATEGIES TO SERVE POPULATIONS MOST IN NEED OF LITERACY SERVICES

Strategies for developing appropriate and effective instruction, literacy activities, and supportive services for the target populations include planning and coordinating activities that ensure access to services, developing appropriate curricula, providing for staff development, and providing specialized services.

These strategies include the following:

- Require local-funded providers to provide documentation of coordination and collaboration with the area Workforce Investment group;
- Approve sites through the Request for Proposals process that provide maximum access to the target population;
- Require funded providers to offer classes that are accessible to adults with disabilities;
- Develop special services and curricula for target populations, such as providing specialized service for individuals with special learning needs. One example would be to provide audio tapes for the severely dyslexic individual;
- Provide and/or refer students for supportive services, including child care and transportation through collaboration with Head Start, Even Start, Family Resource Centers and other family-focused local programs;
- Provide special funding and services to recruit, retain, refer, and counsel students who are TANF recipients, or who are eligible to receive such benefits;
- Develop special funding for the development and coordination of family literacy and workplace literacy programs;
- Encourage staff development activities on accountability, utilization of technology for instruction, and continuing activities that help instructors meet the needs of the learning disabled and special needs students;
- Support staff attendance and participation in professional association activities in the state, region, and nation that focus on issues relating to target populations;
- Utilize the state selected data management system to monitor the effectiveness of programs serving the target population groups, and to gather data about the referral sources;
- Provide technical assistance and professional development activities that will enhance the ability of local programs to provide employability and life skill components into all appropriate program components; and
- Require programs to provide assessment of educational and support service needs, educational planning, assessment of entry and ongoing learning gains, and linkages with training, employment and higher education agencies.

Montana's ESL services are minimal due to the limited demand local programs receive. The Willard program in Missoula provides the most comprehensive ESL services, which include a full-time instructor and many volunteers. All eight of Montana's LVA affiliates provide literacy and ESL services to students. Other ABE programs that have minimal request for ESL services will still provide ESL to anyone who requests it, to the greatest extent possible.

4.0 INTEGRATION WITH OTHER ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

4.1 DESCRIPTION OF PLANNED INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES

Adult education programs are not offered in isolation of other career development and employment and training activities provided in the state. Many members of the AEFLA community of providers participate and serve on their local workforce investment board or council, or the local management team, are actively involved in planning and strategy with WIA 1998 activities through participation meetings or as members of various task forces created by WIA 1998.

Local providers may be very active with local efforts at one-stop system development, which will be integrated within the WIA 1998 system. In communities that offer a one-stop system of service, local adult educators will be active in infusing adult education services into the one-stop system.

Due to the small population of Montana, many committees or meetings that address WIA 1998, AEFLA, Perkins III, One-Stop, School-to-Work often have as members many of the same individuals. In an effort to consolidate, coordinate and cooperate within the community and across the state, this “overlapping” of attendees at meetings, and in the planning and development process, can be an advantage toward eventual unification of service provision. The stakeholders are fully invested and participating in the many aspects of an adult education, job training and employment system. There is a good grasp of the need to support integration between programs, within regions, and across the field of constituents.

Appendix (C) includes the organizational chart for Montana’s Office of Public Instruction, Montana’s State Workforce Investment Act Implementation chart, and Montana’s Workforce System (One-Stop).

4.2 STATE UNIFIED PLAN

At the time of the submission of Montana’s State Plan for AEFLA, there are no plans for submitting a Unified Plan.

10.0 DESCRIPTION OF STEPS TO ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS

All eligible programs, to the greatest extent possible, will receive a copy of the Request for Proposal for Program Year 2001/2002. At this time, Montana has one RFP and will distribute the RFP to the eligible recipients to the greatest extent possible. The state may choose to develop multiple RFPs for years 2-5. If multiple RFPs are developed, all eligible recipients will receive all RFPs. The state's process for applying for AEFLA funds will be open to all eligible recipients.

10.1 DESCRIPTION OF STEPS

Section 231(c) states that each eligible agency receiving funds under this subtitle shall ensure that—

- (1) all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants or contracts under this section; and**
- (2) the same grant or contract announcement process is used for all eligible providers in the state of outlying area.**

All eligible recipients will have direct and equitable access to federal AEFLA funds. Direct and equitable access will be provided by notifying eligible providers of the availability of funds through the following means:

- (1) Eligible providers will be notified of the availability of funds by direct mail to the greatest extent possible.
- (2) Notification of availability of funds will be posted in the state's largest newspapers, including the Missoulian, Billings Gazette, Bozeman Chronicle, Helena Independent Record, Great Falls Tribune, and the Butte Montana Standard.
- (3) Information about fund availability will be posted electronically via MetNet. MetNet is the Montana Office of Public Instruction Internet site.
- (4) The state will hold a series of Technical Assistance workshops to assist eligible applicants in the preparation of an RFP. The RFP workshop schedule will be included in the RFP mailing and other information related to the availability of funds. The following workshop locations have been determined as reaching the largest portion of eligible providers: Missoula, Great Falls, Billings or Helena.
- (5) Additional technical assistance will be provided upon request to the eligible state agency.

0.2 NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

From Section 6.3—Notice of Availability

All eligible recipients will have direct and equitable access to federal AEFLA funds. Direct and equitable access will be provided by notifying eligible providers of the availability of funds through the following means:

- (1) Eligible providers will be notified of the availability of funds by direct mail to the greatest extent possible;
- (2) Notification of availability of funds will be posted in the state's largest newspapers, including the Missoulian, Billings Gazette, Bozeman Chronicle, Helena Independent Record, Great Falls Tribune, and the Butte Montana Standard; and
- (3) Information about fund availability will be posted electronically via MetNet. MetNet is the Montana Office of Public Instruction Internet site.

1.0 PROGRAMS FOR CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

During the 1997-1998 year, 1,249 criminal offenders were served. Participants were served in jails and pre-release centers. Montana is currently expanding the prison system to include regional prisons, which will have an impact on the number of incarcerated individuals who can be served. Participants in day-treatment centers are also served.

The eligible agency may not spend more than 10 percent of the 82.5 percent of the state grant that must be allotted to local programs for Sec. 225 activities. The state is not required to spend the maximum of 10 percent on corrections education.

1.1 TYPES OF PROGRAMS

From funds made available under Sec. 222(a)(1) for a fiscal year, each eligible agency shall carry out corrections education or education for other institutionalized individuals, including academic programs. Funds shall be used for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and for other institutionalized individuals, including academic programs for:

- (1) Basic education;
- (2) Special education programs as determined by the eligible agency;
- (3) English literacy programs; and
- (4) Secondary school credit programs.

11.2 PRIORITY

Each eligible agency that is using assistance programs under this Section to carry out a program for criminal offenders in a correctional institution shall give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

Montana's state plan for adult basic education goes further by giving priority to programs that emphasize adult basic education services for individuals in local and community corrections programs.

11.3 TYPES OF INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS

Correctional institution means any

- (1) Prison;
- (2) Jail;
- (3) Reformatory;
- (4) Work farm;
- (5) Detention center; or
- (6) Halfway house, community-based rehabilitation center, or other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders.

12.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Not more than 12.5 percent of funds made available under Section 222(a)(2), State Distribution of Funds, for activities described in Section 223, State Leadership Activities. The Montana Office of Public Instruction plans to conduct the leadership activities below that were identified in the Needs Assessment conducted by staff at Montana State University.

12.1 DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

- Implement professional development programs at the state, regional and local levels to improve the quality of adult education and literacy instruction. Specifically, State Leadership funds will be used to provide continued resources for the Professional Development Scholarship Program, in coordination with the Montana Association of Adult and Community Education (MAACE).
- Provide technical assistance to providers of adult education and literacy activities to assist them to achieve the goal of continuous quality improvement.
- Comprehensive reviews and strategic planning for addressing Montana's ABE management information system needs. Montana is moving from the Participant Attendance and Tracking System (PATS) to utilizing a more current and updated software for data manage-

ment. By July 1, 2000, the state agency intends to have piloted and chosen another system for local programs to use that will be in accordance with the National Reporting Standards.

- Continued support of the state's GED on TV program.
- Continued support of the Learning Disabilities Task Force and emphasis on learning disability issues for instructors and programs.
- Creation of a Native American Issue Task Force as a means to better serve Montana's Indian communities.
- Support of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Council consisting of individuals interested in Adult Basic Education and Literacy. Council members may consist of Adult Basic Education (ABE) teachers, administrators, agencies with an interest in ABE/Literacy or Workforce Development, organized labor, representatives from an LVA tutor program, the private sector, and Adult Learner, postsecondary education, and the State Director of Adult Basic Education.

2.2 DESCRIPTION OF JOINT PLANNING AND COORDINATION FOR UNIFIED PLAN ONLY

Montana is not submitting a Unified Plan.

2.3 DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

That state of Montana will assure that eligible recipients who receive an award under AEFLA 98 will provide programs and services that serve clients regardless of gender, race, national origin, color, disability or age. Each grantee will be required to provide a list of strategies that they currently employ, or will develop, that will assist in serving individuals representing the mentioned target groups. The state will provide assistance to local programs to develop strategies, and will monitor local programs to assure access for services to special populations are provided.

2.4

The eligible state agency is a full and active partner in all aspects of Montana's One-Stop and Workforce Investment efforts, welfare reform, and organized labor. Every effort has been made to assure that Title II programs of WIA are adequately represented at meetings, conferences and in the development of activities and strategies for service participants. Title II representatives currently sit on the State Workforce Investment Board, the local boards and local management teams.

The state is currently working on a system of securing MOUs and developing an integrated technology system for all participants to utilize. At this time, there are no agreements related to AEFLA fund expenditures to support the One-Stop System. However, there are initial agreements at the state and local level between partners related to support for the One-Stop System.



APPENDIX A

Core Indicators of Performance

And

Outcome Measures Definitions

PERFORMANCE MEASURES WORKSHEET

Core Indicator #1: Demonstrated Improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills.

Performance Measures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Beginning ESL The percentage of adult learners enrolled in beginning ESL who completed that level (# completed level ÷ enrolled = % completed)	36% of beginning level employees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	37% of beginning level employees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	39% of beginning level employees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)
Low Intermediate ESL The percentage of adult learners enrolled in Low Intermediate ESL who completed that level (# completed level ÷ enrolled = % completed)	35% of beginning level employees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	37% of beginning level employees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	39% of beginning level employees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)
High Intermediate ESL The percentage of adult learners enrolled in High Intermediate ESL who completed that level (# completed level ÷ enrolled = % completed)	35% of beginning level employees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	37% of beginning level employees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	39% of beginning level employees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)
Advanced ESL The percentage of adult learners enrolled in Advanced ESL who completed that level (# completed level ÷ enrolled = % completed)	40% of beginning level employees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	43% of beginning level employees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	46% of beginning level employees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)



PERFORMANCE MEASURES WORKSHEET

Core Indicator #2: Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.

Performance Measures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Placement in postsecondary education or training. The total number of adult learners entering other academic or vocational programs (at the postsecondary level) This data can be found in Table #6 of current report form	10 adult learners will enroll in further academic or vocational programs	12 adult learners will enroll in further academic or vocational programs	14 adult learners will enroll in further academic or vocational programs
Placement in unsubsidized employment The percentage of unemployed adult learners (in the workforce) who obtained unsubsidized employment The number of adults obtaining a job can be found on Table 6 of the current report form The number of adults unemployed and in the workforce can be found in Table 5 of the current report form		18% of unemployed adult learners enrolled (and in the workforce) will obtain unsubsidized employment	20% of unemployed adult learners enrolled (and in the workforce) will obtain unsubsidized employment

unemployed adult learners (in the workforce) who obtained unsubsidized employment ÷ # of unemployed adult learners (in the workforce) enrolled

PERFORMANCE MEASURES WORKSHEET

Core Indicator #2: Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.

Performance Measures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Retention in or job advancement The total number of adult learners who retained employment or advanced on the job This information can be found in Table 6 in the current report form	1% adults will be retained on the job or advance on the job	7% adults will be retained on the job or advance on the job	10% adults will be retained on the job or advance on the job
Core Indicator #3: Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent. Low Adult Secondary Education The percentage of adult learners enrolled in Low Adult Secondary education who complete the level. This information can be found in Table 6 in the current report form		13% adults will earn a high school diploma or recognized equivalent	16% adults will earn a high school diploma or recognized equivalent



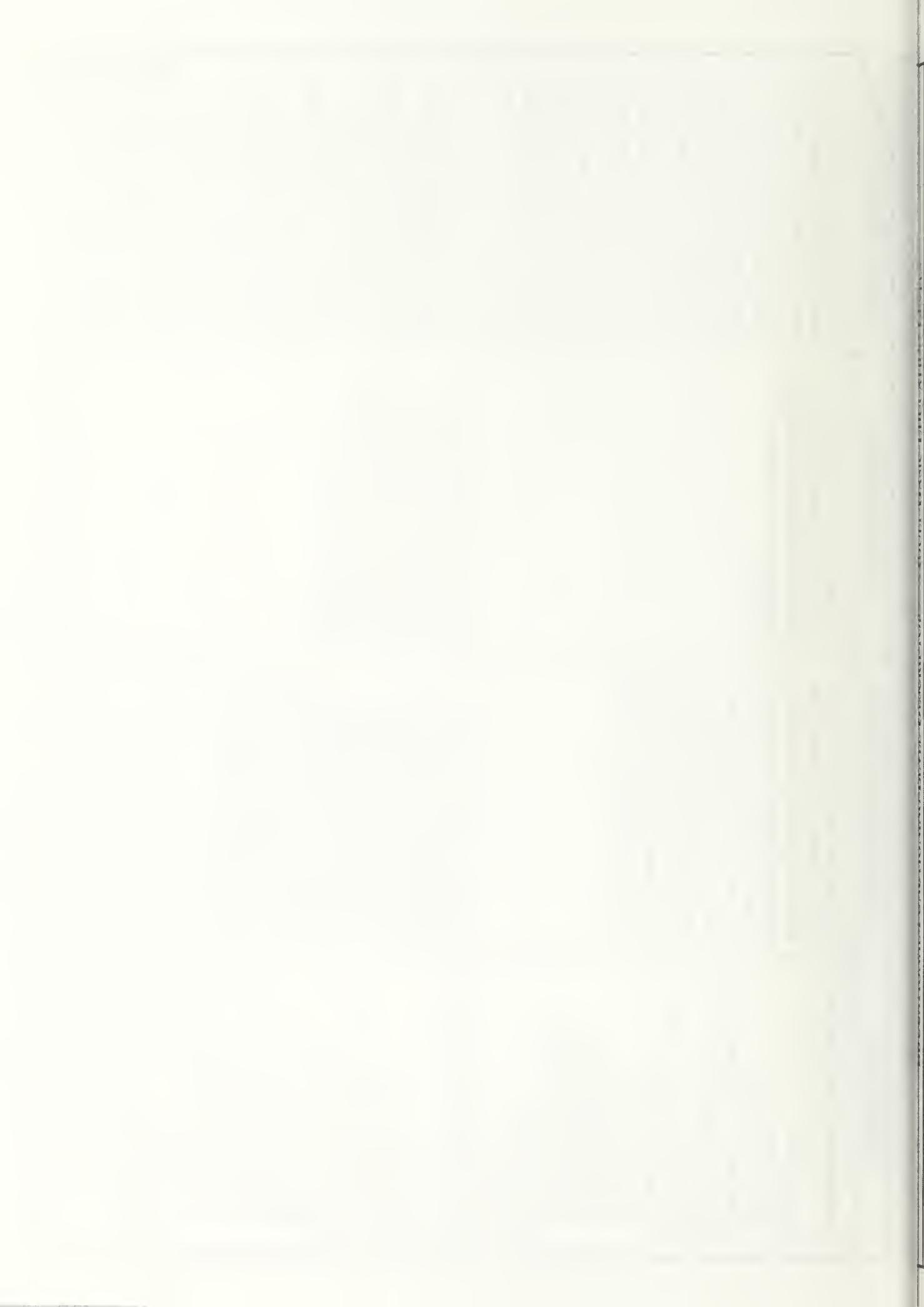
PERFORMANCE MEASURES WORKSHEET

Core Indicator #1: Demonstrated Improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills.

Performance Measures	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Beginning Literacy (ABE) The percentage of adult learners enrolled in Beginning Literacy who completed that level (# completed level ÷ enrolled = % completed)	36% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	38% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	40% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)
Beginning ABE The percentage of adult learners enrolled in Beginning ABE who completed that level (# completed level ÷ enrolled = % completed)	38% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	40% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	42% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)
Low Intermediate ABE The percentage of adult learners enrolled in Low Intermediate ABE who completed that level (# completed level ÷ enrolled = % completed)	32% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	34% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	36% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)
High Intermediate ABE The percentage of adult learners enrolled in High Intermediate ABE who completed that level (# completed level ÷ enrolled = % completed)	32% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	34% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	36% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)
Beginning Literacy (ESL) The percentage of adult learners enrolled in Beginning Literacy (ESL) who completed that level (# completed level ÷ enrolled = % completed)	20% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	22% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)	24% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level (or will attain individual goals)

Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Numeracy Skills	Basic Reading and Writing
Beginning ABE Literacy Test Benchmark: TABLE (5-6) scale scores: Total reading: 1-529 Total math: 1-540 (grade level 0-1.9) TABLE (7-8): See Appendix C CASAS: 200 and below AMES (B, ABE) scale scores: Reading: 1-500 Computation: 1-476 Communication: 388-496 ABLE scale scores: Reading: 1-523 Math: 1-521	Individual has no reading or writing skills in any language, or has minimal skills, such as the ability to read and write own name or simple isolated words. The individual may be able to write letters or numbers and copy simple words and there may be no or incomplete recognition of the alphabet; may have difficulty using a writing instrument. There is little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language.	Individual has little or no recognition of numbers or simple counting skills or may have only minimal skills, such as the ability to add or subtract single digit numbers.	Individual has little or no ability to read basic signs or maps, can provide limited personal information on simple forms and has few or no workplace skills. The individual can handle routine entry level jobs that require little or no basic written communication or computational skills and no knowledge of computers or other technology.
Beginning Basic Education Test Benchmark: TABLE (5-6) scale scores: Total reading: 530-679 Total math: 541-677/grade level 2-3. 9) TABLE (7-8): See Appendix C CASAS: 201-210 AMES (B, ABE) scale scores: Reading: 503-514 Computation: 477-492 Communication: 498-505 ABLE scale scores: Reading: 525-612 Math: 530-591	Individual can read and print numbers and letters, but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading; can write sight words and copy lists of familiar words and phrases; may also be able to write simple sentences or phrases such as name, address and phone number; may also write very simple messages. Narrative writing is disorganized and unclear; inconsistently uses simple punctuation (e.g., periods, commas, question marks); contains frequent errors in spelling.	Individual can count, add and subtract three digit numbers, can perform multiplication through 12; can identify simple fractions and perform other simple arithmetic operations.	Individual is able to read simple directions, signs and maps, fill out simple forms requiring basic personal information, write phone messages and make simple change. There is minimal knowledge of, and experience with, using computers and related technology. The individual can handle basic entry level jobs that require minimal literacy skills; can recognize very short, explicit, pictorial texts, e.g., understands logos related to worker safety before using a piece of machinery; can read want ads and complete simple job applications.

Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Numeracy Skills	Basic Reading and Writing
Low Intermediate Basic Education Test Benchmark: TABLE (5-6) scale scores: Total reading: 680-722 Total math: 678-729 (grade level 4-5.9) TABLE (7-8): See Appendix C CASAS: 211-220 AMES (B and C, ABE) scale scores: Reading (B): 517-609 Reading (C): 514-521 Computation (B): 494-603 Computation (C): 493-508 Communication (B): 508-605 Communication (C): 509-513 ABLE scale scores: Reading: 613-644 Math: 593-641	Individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend with high accuracy simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing a familiar vocabulary; can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations, but lacks complete clarity and focus. Sentence structure lacks variety, but shows some control of basic grammar (e.g., present and past tense), and consistent use of punctuation (e.g., periods, capitalization).	Individual can perform with high accuracy all four basic math operations using whole numbers up to three digits; can identify and use all basic mathematical symbols.	Individual is able to handle basic reading, writing and computational tasks related to life roles, such as completing medical forms, order forms or job applications, can read simple charts, graphs labels and payroll stubs and simple authentic materials if familiar with the topic. The individual can use simple computer programs and perform a sequence of routine tasks given direction using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer operation). The individual can qualify for entry level jobs that require following basic written instructions and diagrams with assistance, such as oral clarification; can write a short report or message to fellow workers; can read simple dials and scales and take routine measurements.
High Intermediate Basic Education Test Benchmark: TABLE (5-6) scale scores: Total reading: 723-761 Total math: 730-776 (grade level 6-8.9) TABLE (7-8): See Appendix C CASAS: 221-235 AMES (C and D, ABE) scale scores: Reading (C): 525-612 Reading (D): 522-543 Computation (C): 510-627 Computation (D): 509-532 Communication (C): 516-611 Communication (D): 516-622 ABLE scale scores: Reading: 646-680 Math: 643-693	Individual can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., clear main idea, chronological order); can use context to determine meaning; can interpret actions required in specific written directions, can write simple paragraphs with main idea and supporting detail on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues) by recombining learned vocabulary and structures; can self and peer edit for spelling and punctuation errors.	Individual can perform all four basic math operations with whole numbers and fractions; can determine correct math operations for solving narrative math problems and can convert fractions to decimals and decimals to fractions; can perform basic operations on fractions.	Individual is able to handle basic life skills tasks such as graphs, charts and labels, and can follow multi-step diagrams; can read authentic materials on familiar topics, such as simple employee handbooks and payroll stubs; can complete forms such as a job application and reconcile a bank statement. Can handle jobs that involve following simple written instructions and diagrams; can read procedural texts, where the information is supported by diagrams, to remedy a problem, such as locating a problem with a machine or carrying out repairs using a repair manual. The individual can learn or work with most basic computer software, such as using a word processor to produce own texts; can follow simple instructions for using technology.



Literacy Level	Speaking and Listening	Basic Reading and Writing	Function and Workplace Skills
High Intermediate ESL Test Benchmark: CASAS (Life Skills): 211-220 SPL (Speaking): 5 SPL (Reading and Writing): 6 Oral Best: 51-57	Individual can understand learned phrases and short new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly and with some repetition; can communicate basic survival needs with some help; can participate in conversation in limited social situations and use new phrases with hesitation; relies on description and concrete terms. There is inconsistent control of more complex grammar.	Individual can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., clear main idea, chronological order); can use context to determine meaning; can interpret actions required in specific written directions, can write simple paragraphs with main idea and supporting detail on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues by recombining learned vocabulary and structures; can self and peer edit for spelling and punctuation errors.	Individual can meet basic survival and social needs, can follow some simple oral and written instruction and has some ability to communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects; can write messages and notes related to basic needs; complete basic medical forms and job applications; can handle jobs that involve basic oral instructions and written communication in tasks that can be clarified orally. The individual can work with or learn basic computer software, such as word processing; can follow simple instructions for using technology.
Low Advanced ESL Test Benchmark: CASAS (Life Skills): 221-235 SPL (Speaking): 6 SPL (Reading and Writing): 7 Oral Best: 58-64	Individual can converse on many everyday subjects and some subjects with unfamiliar vocabulary, but may need repetition, rewording or slower speech; can speak creatively, but with hesitation; can clarify general meaning by rewording and has control of basic grammar; understands descriptive and spoken narrative and can comprehend abstract concepts in familiar contexts.	Individual is able to read simple descriptions and narratives on familiar subjects or from which new vocabulary can be determined by context; can make some minimal inferences about familiar texts and compare and contrast information from such texts, but not consistently. The individual can write simple narrative descriptions and short essays on familiar topics, such as customs in native country; has consistent use of basic punctuation, but makes grammatical errors with complex structures.	Individual can function independently to meet most survival needs and can communicate on the telephone on familiar topics; can interpret simple charts and graphics; can handle jobs that require simple oral and written instructions, multi-step diagrams and limited public interaction. The individual can use all basic software applications, understand the impact of technology and select the correct technology in a new situation.
High Advanced ESL Test Benchmark: CASAS (Life Skills): 236 and above SPL (Speaking): 7 and higher SPL (Reading and Writing): 8 and higher Oral Best: 65 and higher			Individual can read authentic materials on everyday subjects and can handle most reading related to life roles; can consistently and fully interpret descriptive narratives on familiar topics and gain meaning from unfamiliar topics; uses increased control of language and meaning-making strategies to gain meaning of unfamiliar texts. The individual can write multiparagraph essays with a clear introduction and development of ideas; writing contains well formed sentences, appropriate mechanics and spelling, and few grammatical errors.

Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Numeracy Skills	Basic Reading and Writing
Low Adult Secondary Education Test Benchmark: TABLE (5-6) scale scores: Total reading: 762-776 Total math: 777-789 (grade level 9-10.9) TABLE (7-8): See Appendix C CASAS: 236-245 AMES (E, ABE) scale scores: Reading: 544-561 Computation: 534-548 Communication: 527-535 ABLE scale scores: Reading: 682-697 Math: 694-716 Pass at least one GED practice test.	Individual can comprehend expository writing and identify spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors; can comprehend a variety of materials such as periodicals and nontechnical journals on common topics; can comprehend library reference materials and compose multi-paragraph essays; can listen to oral instructions and write an accurate synthesis of them; can identify the main idea in reading selections and use a variety of context issues to determine meaning. Writing is organized and cohesive with few mechanical errors; can write using a complex sentence structure; can write personal notes and letters that accurately reflect thoughts.	Individual can perform all basic math functions with whole numbers, decimals and fractions; can interpret and solve simple algebraic equations, tables and graphs and can develop own tables and graphs; can use math in business transactions.	Individual is able or can learn to follow simple multi-step directions, and read common legal forms and manuals; can integrate information from texts, charts and graphs; can create and use tables and graphs; can complete forms and applications and complete resumes; can perform jobs that require interpreting information from various sources and writing or explaining tasks to other workers; is proficient using computers and can use most common computer applications; can understand the impact of using different technologies; can interpret the appropriate use of new software and technology.
High Adult Secondary Education Test Benchmark: TABLE (5-6) scale scores: Total reading: 777-789 (grade level 11-12) TABLE (7-8): See Appendix C CASAS: 246 and higher AMES (E, ABE) scale scores: Reading: 565-634 Computation: 551-645 Communication: 538-620 ABLE scale scores: Reading: 699-813 Math: 717-885 Pass at least three GED practice tests.	Individual can comprehend, explain and analyze information from a variety of literacy works, including primary source materials and professional journals; can use context cues and higher order processes to interpret meaning of written material. Writing is cohesive with clearly expressed ideas supported by relevant detail; can use varied and complex sentence structures with few mechanical errors.	Individual can make mathematical estimates of time and space and can apply principles of geometry to measure angles, lines and surfaces; can also apply trigonometric functions.	Individuals are able to read technical information and complex manuals; can comprehend some college level books and apprenticeship manuals; can function in most job situations involving higher order thinking; can read text and explain a procedure about a complex and unfamiliar work procedure, such as operating a complex piece of machinery; can evaluate new work situations and processes, can work productively and collaboratively in groups and serve as facilitator and reporter of group work. The individual is able to use common software and learn new software applications; can define the purpose of new technology and software and select appropriate technology; can adapt use of software or technology to new situations and can instruct others, in written or oral form on software and technology use.



EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ADULT BASIC EDUCATION LEVELS

Literacy Level	Speaking and Listening	Basic Reading and Writing	Function and Workplace Skills
Beginning ESL Literacy Individual cannot speak or understand English, or understands only isolated words or phrases. Test Benchmark: CASAS (Life Skills): 165-180 SPL (Speaking): 0-1 SPL (Reading and Writing): 0-1 Oral Best: 0-15	Individual has no reading or writing skills in any language, or has minimal skills, such as the ability to read and write own name or simple isolated words. The individual may be able to write letters or numbers and copy simple words and there may be no or incomplete recognition of the alphabet; may have difficulty using a writing instrument. There is little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language.		Individual functions minimally or not at all in English and can communicate only through gestures or a few isolated words, such as name and other personal information, may recognize only common signs or symbols (e.g., stop sign, product logos); can handle only very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English. There is no knowledge or use of computers or technology.
Beginning ESL Individual can understand frequently used words in context and very simple phrases spoken slowly and with some repetition; there is little communicative output and only in the most routine situations; little or no control over basic grammar, survival needs can be communicated simply, and there is some understanding of simple questions. Test Benchmark: CASAS (Life Skills): 181-200 SPL (Speaking): 2-3 SPL (Reading and Writing): 2-4 Oral Best: 16-41		Individual can read and print numbers and letters, but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading; can write simple words and copy lists of familiar words and phrases; may also be able to write simple sentences or phrases such as name, address and phone number; may also write very simple messages. Narrative writing is disorganized and unclear; inconsistently uses simple punctuation (e.g., periods, commas, question marks); contains frequent errors in spelling.	Individual functions with difficulty in situations related to immediate needs and in limited social situation; has some simple oral communication abilities using simple learned and repeated phrases; may need frequent repetition; can prefix personal information on simple forms; can recognize common forms of print found in the home and environment, such as labels and product names; can handle routine entry level jobs that require only most basic written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. There is minimal knowledge or experience using computers or technology.
			Individual can interpret simple directions and schedules, signs and maps; can fill out simple forms, but needs support on some documents that are not simplified; can handle routine entry level jobs that involve some written or oral English communication, but in which job tasks can be demonstrated. Individual can use simple computer programs and can perform a sequence of routine tasks given directions using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer).
Low Intermediate ESL Individual can understand simple learned phrases and limited new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly with frequent repetition; can ask and respond to questions using such phrases; can express basic survival needs and participate in some routine social conversations, although with some difficulty; has some control of basic grammar. Test Benchmark: CASAS (Life Skills): 201-210 SPL (Speaking): 4 SPL (Reading and Writing): 5 Oral Best: 42-50			Individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend with high accuracy simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing a familiar vocabulary; can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations, but lacks complete clarity and focus. Sentence structure lacks variety, but shows some control of basic grammar (e.g., present and past tense), and consistent use of punctuation (e.g., periods, capitalization).



APPENDIX B

Needs Assessment Information

And

Montana Map

20. 10. 1917
Dear Father,
I am sending you a copy of the
newspaper from which I have
cut out the following:
1. The following is a copy of
the first page of the
newspaper.



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

PO BOX 202501
HELENA MT 59620-2501
www.metnet.state.mt.us
(406) 444-3680

Nancy Keenan
Superintendent

MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Individuals

From: Becky Bird, Director
Adult Basic Education

Date: February 25, 2000

Re: Program Years 2001-2002 Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Funds Information

This memo contains important information for individuals who are considering submitting a proposal for Program Years 2001-2002 Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds (July 1, 2000 – June 30, 2002). The upcoming cycle of funding will be for a two-year period.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT: All proposals must include the results obtained from a needs assessment, and a description of the methods used to conduct the needs assessment. The needs assessment provides the information needed to support your request and to assist you in developing the focus of the program and the services necessary to implement the program. Participant input must be a critical part of determining your program needs. Needs assessment information should be as current as possible.

FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS: The available funding from state and federal resources to support Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) basic grant activities is anticipated to be slightly more than \$1,000,000 for program years 2001 through 2002 (July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2002.)

The following entities are eligible to apply for funds:

- a. a local education agency;
- b. a community-based organization of demonstrated effectiveness;
- c. a volunteer literacy organization of demonstrated effectiveness;
- d. an institution of higher education;
- e. a public or private nonprofit agency;
- f. a library;

- g. a public housing authority;
- h. a non-profit institution that is not described in any of subparagraphs (a) through (g) and has the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families; and
- i. a consortium of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in any of subparagraphs (a) through (h).

The enclosed map is based on the Montana Department of Labor and Industry structure for Local Management Teams that will operate through the One-Stop Centers and with the state workforce investment activities. This map is to serve as a guide for determining what service area or areas your proposal will address. The boundaries on this map are meant to be suggestive and for your consideration.

Due to the limited resources available, and in order to provide the best possible service that includes remote areas, the state is encouraging local providers to submit proposals that address regional needs as well as local community needs and service to satellite areas.

All eligible recipients will be provided direct and equitable access to the application process. Proposals should be highly collaborative and show a strong commitment to serving outlying areas, as well as the agency's primary community. Proposals may serve more than one area, or share an area with another provider.

The minimum award for program years 2001-2002 will be \$20,000 per year. This is a competitive grant process. Consortia proposals are highly recommended.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

A complete proposal requesting Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Funds for Program Year 2001 and Program Year 2002 must contain the results of a needs assessment that reflects the region to be included for service. It is important that the information gained through the needs assessment be as current and reflective of local and regional issues as possible.

The cost of the needs assessment is not reimbursable. The assessment should include both qualitative and quantitative data that establishes the rationale for your agency's proposal. Five common methods of assessment are described in the attached Supplement to this RFP. Any method of needs assessment may be used; your method and its results must be described in your proposal.

Local needs assessment information can be strengthened and supplemented by using census data, economic indicators developed by the state, Department of Commerce information, surveys implemented by the Chamber of Commerce, school district, or any credible source that addresses the needs for your program and the services to be provided. Needs assessment information is used to determine program priorities and services, program improvements and program expansion opportunities.

Support services of dependent care and transportation for individuals participating in Adult Education and Family Literacy programs are an allowable use of funds.

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act funds may be used to provide programs and services in one or more of the following categories:

1. Adult Education and Literacy Services, including workplace literacy services.
2. Family Literacy Services.
3. English Literacy programs.

For more information, contact Becky Bird, State Director of Adult Basic Education, at 406-444-4443, or at bbird@state.mt.us.

FIVE METHODS OF ASSESSING NEEDS

1. Community Forums

The community forum is a meeting or a series of meetings of citizens to assess needs. The meetings should be advertised widely and held in a neutral place at a convenient time to encourage participation of a wide range of citizens. It is important to ensure that all in attendance have the opportunity to express their opinions. A good technique for encouraging input is to have the participants break into small discussion groups for part of the meeting.

Advantages of the community forum:

- o Serves as a low-cost method for providing public input into the planning process
- o Usually enables citizens to feel a high level of involvement and satisfaction with the experience if it is conducted so as to assure that all participants have an opportunity to express their views
- o Can be a vehicle for identifying leaders who are willing to assist with future programs

Disadvantages of the community forum:

- o May not be attended by an unbiased cross-section of the community
- o May be monopolized by a vocal minority or turn into gripe sessions if not organized and facilitated properly
- o May raise citizens' expectations that your organization will meet needs that are beyond the scope of your resources or capabilities
- o May yield data that are impressionistic and should be cross-validated by another technique

2. Focused Group Discussions

This approach involves gathering small groups of not more than 12 persons to identify needs. An effort should be made to ensure that the participants represent their population category. It is also important to ensure equal participation through a technique such as the nominal group technique described below.

The conditions for a nominal group are simulated by having members first write their ideas of existing needs on a slip of paper without discussing these ideas. A period of from 5 to 15 minutes is usually required to write ideas, and the leader ensures there is

no talking during this time. The next step is for each member, in turn, to voice an idea. As a need is suggested, it is written by the leader on a blackboard or flipchart. No evaluation of needs or discussion of them happens at this time. Needs are solicited until no more ideas differing from those already posted are suggested. A person may suggest needs not originally considered, and members are encouraged to build on each other's ideas. After all the needs are posted, the leader goes down the list of needs and asks if there are any questions, statements of clarification, or statements of agreement or disagreement regarding the relevance of the needs identified. There may also be a discussion of ways others in the community currently meet this need or have met it in the past.

Advantages of focused group discussions:

- o Cost-effective means of gaining public input
- o Allows for the easy assembly of groups through existing organizations, although some biases may exist

Disadvantage of focused group discussions:

- o May yield data that are impressionistic and should be cross-validated by other techniques

3. Key Informant

This is a method designed to elicit needs information from influential community members, such as public officials, industry representatives, or agency directors. Either personal interviews may be conducted or questionnaires mailed with telephone follow up.

Advantages of key informant method:

- o Is quick, relatively uncomplicated, and inexpensive, especially when mailed questionnaires with telephone follow up is used.
- o Provides public relations benefits:
 - Can improve communication between those concerned with needs and key persons in the community.
 - Can develop support for addressing needs.
 - Can increase understanding of needs issues if some time is taken to provide interviewees with information.

Disadvantages of key informant method:

- o May result in biased data if key informants represent special interests or do not know other segments of the community fully.
- o May lead to biases if those who are most concerned with needs are selected for interview or are the ones most likely to respond.
- o May yield results that are impressionistic and should be cross-validated by other techniques.

4. Survey Research

To ensure methodological "purity," this method involves administering questionnaires through the newspaper, mail, phone, or personal interviews to obtain information on citizen perception of needs.

Advantage of survey research:

- o Most scientifically valid methods of obtaining information if the instrument is well-designed, pre-tested, and administered to a random sample; and if the response rate is high.

Disadvantage of survey research:

- o May be the most expensive method of needs assessment.
- o Requires advanced research skills to design and analyze the survey instrument and to select the sample.
- o Necessitates interviewer hiring and training.
- o Requires that quality control be maintained throughout the data collection process.
- o May require that data be analyzed by computer.
- o May yield low response rates, particularly with mail surveys.

5. Social Indicators

This approach involves the use of public records and reports, such as census data, vital statistics, economic indicators, and employment reports. These data are examined for incidents of social problems and their related characteristics. It is best to have data in a time series so trends can be identified. These trends may indicate areas for prevention and/or new programs.

Advantages of social indicators:

- o Uses data that have already been collected.
- o Is helpful in substantiating other more impressionistic methods of needs assessment with "facts" or numbers.

Disadvantages of social indicators:

- o May not reflect accurate picture, as individuals in need of services may not be seeking them (e.g., "discouraged" workers who no longer seek jobs and so are not reflected in unemployment figures).
- o Is not likely to identify new or emerging problems.
- o May necessitate the use of records that are of questionable accuracy and/or not comparable across data collecting agencies.
- o May involve the additional issues of confidentiality of client records.

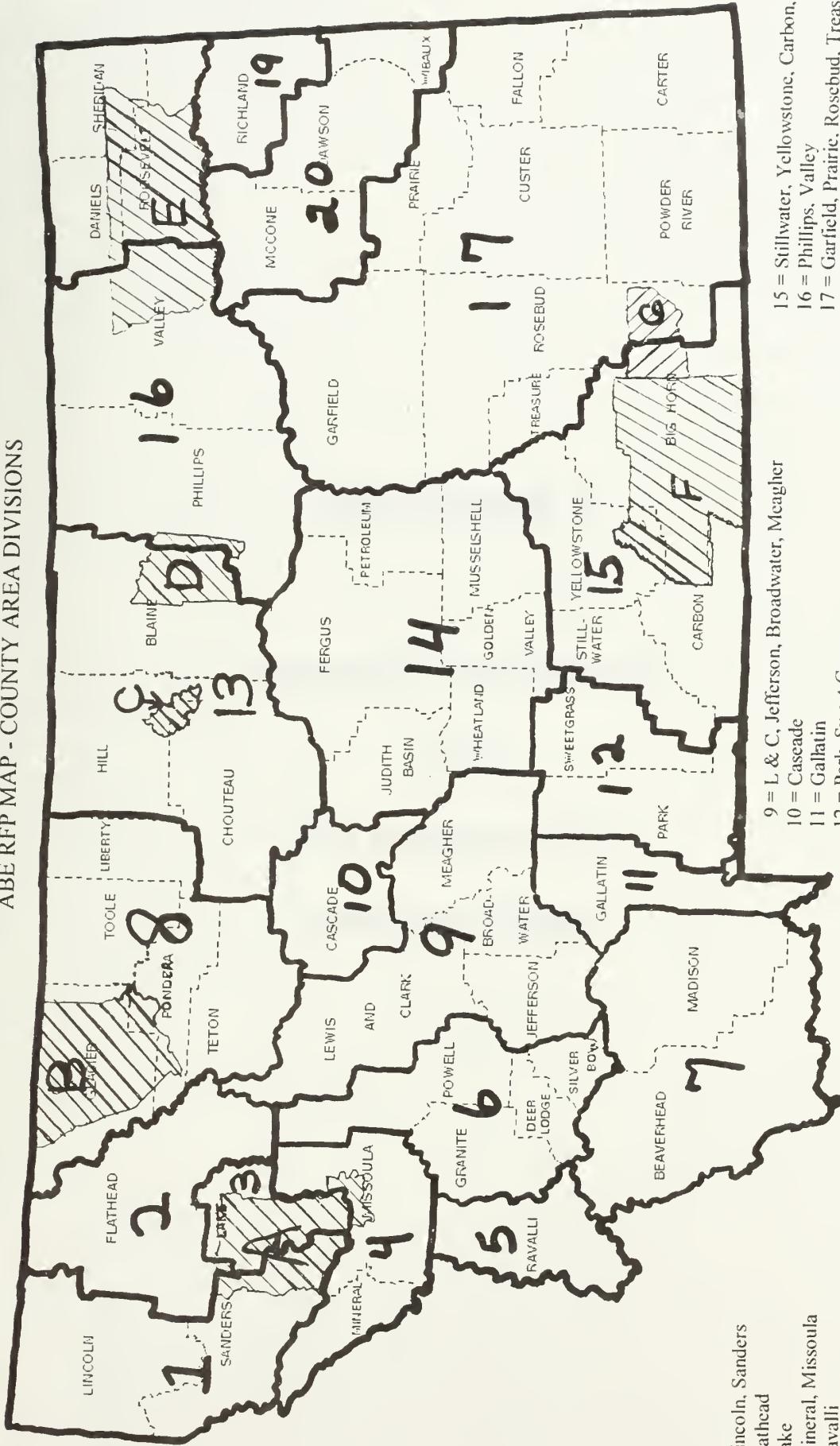
Conclusion

The use of at least two needs assessment methods that include both qualitative and quantitative data is recommended. Choice of methods will depend on resources available for needs assessment. The methods vary considerably with respect to the investment of time, money, and personnel required. The cost of the methods used should reflect the utility of the information obtained.

Your own client and project records, or the deliberate design of project record keeping in this and subsequent years, may make needs assessment requirements easier to meet.



ABE RFP MAP - COUNTY AREA DIVISIONS



1 = Lincoln, Sanders
 2 = Flathead
 3 = Lake
 4 = Mineral, Missoula
 5 = Ravalli
 6 = Granite, Powell, Deer Lodge, Silver Bow
 7 = Beaverhead, Madison
 8 = Glacier, Tool, Liberty, Pondera, Teton
 9 = L & C, Jefferson, Broadwater, Meagher
 10 = Cascade
 11 = Gallatin
 12 = Park, Sweet Grass
 13 = Hill, Blaine, Chouteau
 14 = Judith Basin, Fergus, Petroleum, Wheatland, Golden Valley, Musselshell
 15 = Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Gallatin, Park, Madison
 16 = Toole, Liberty, Carbon, Big Horn
 17 = Garfield, Prairie, Rosebud, Treasure, Custer, Fallon, Powder River, Carter
 18 = Daniels, Sheridan, Roosevelt
 19 = Richland
 20 = McCone, Dawson, Wibaux

Indian Reservations: A=Flathead, B=Blackfeet, C=Rocky Boy, D=Rocky Boy, E=Fort Belknap, F=Crow, G=Northern Cheyenne



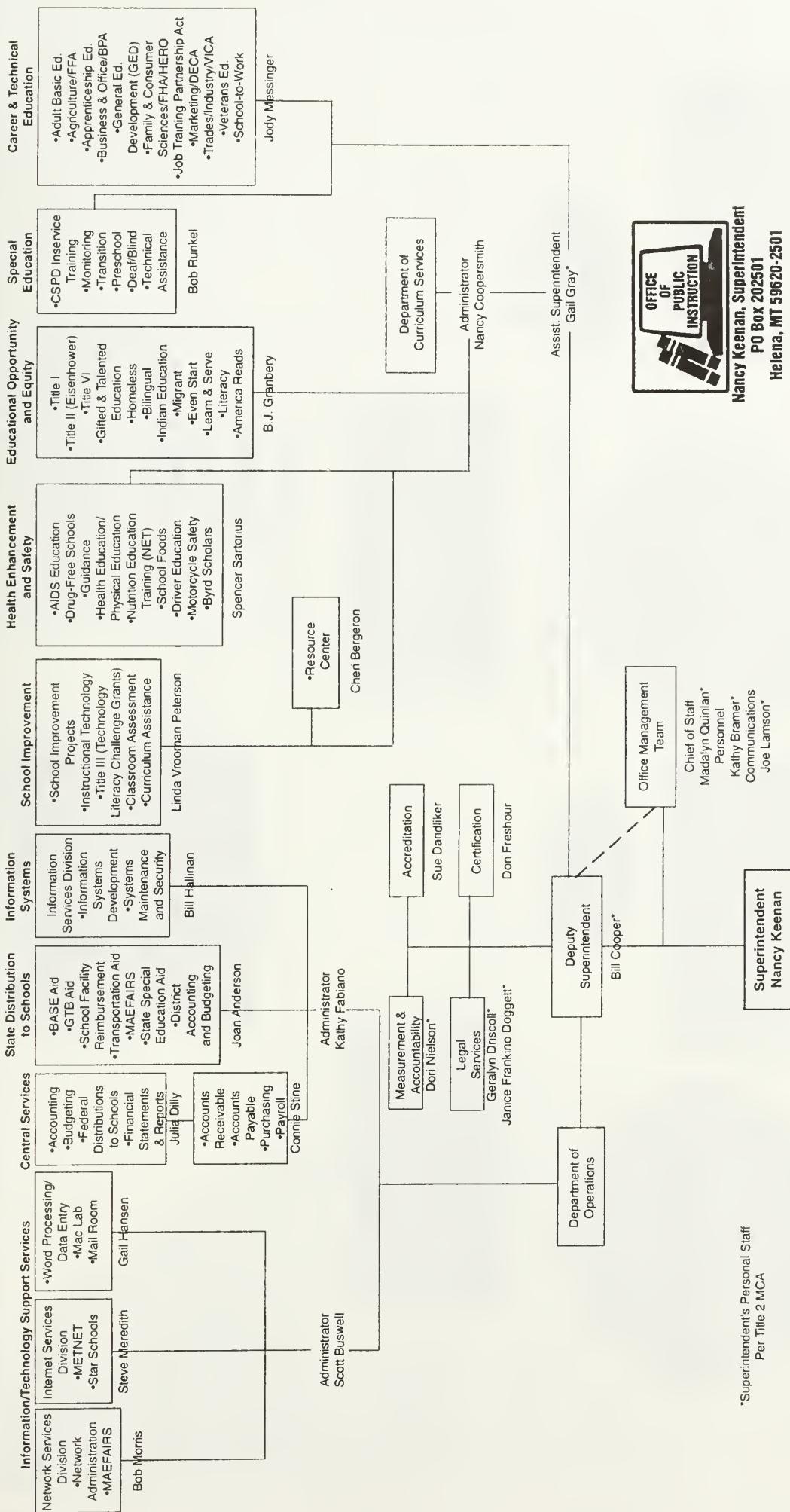
APPENDIX C

Organizational Charts for
OPI
WIA Implementation
Workforce System

MONTANA OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

September 1999



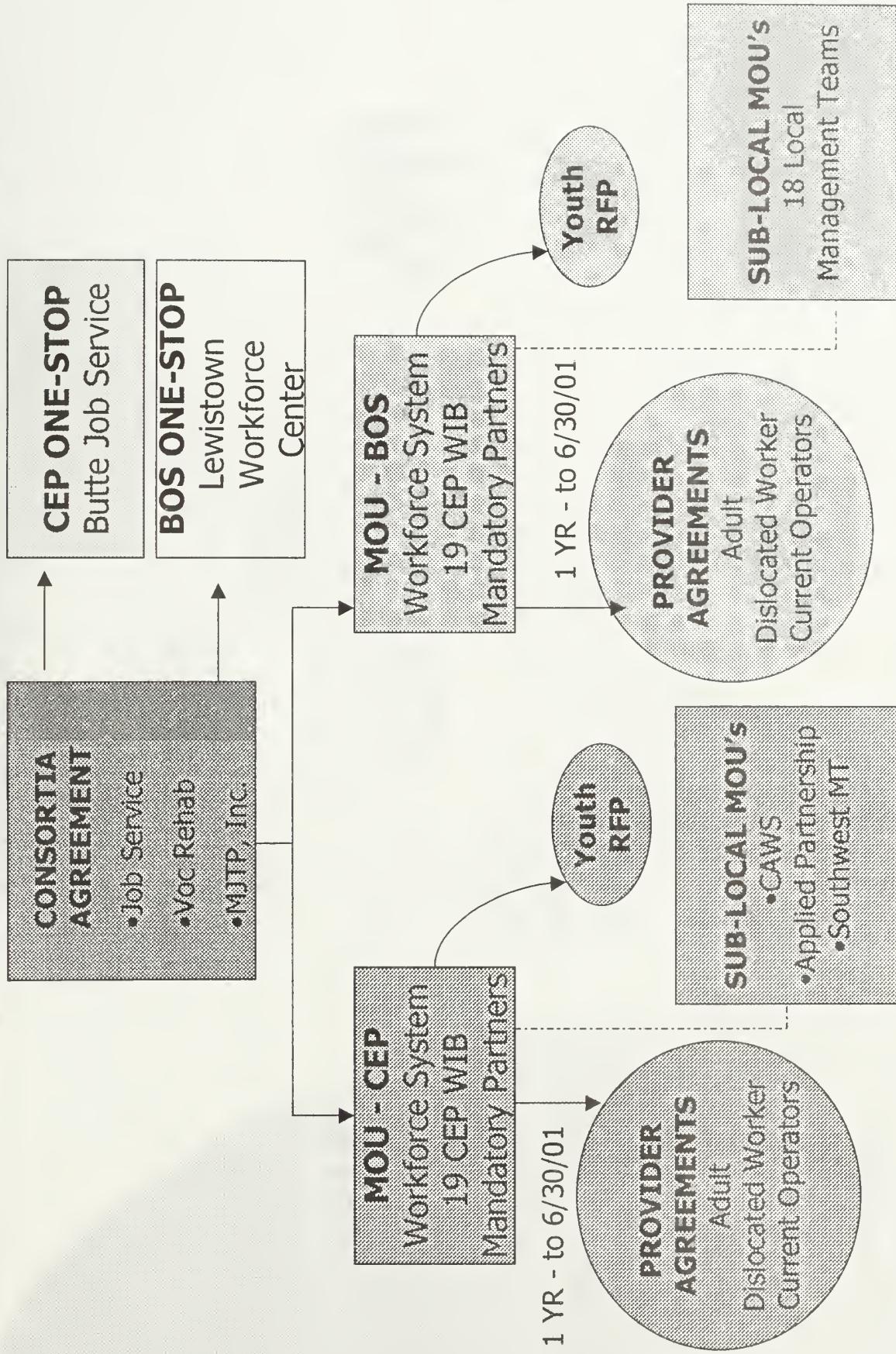
*Superintendent's Personal Staff
Per Title 2 MCA

Nancy Keenan, Superintendent
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 596620-2501

Superintendent
Nancy Keenan



WIA IMPLEMENTATION





WORKFORCE SYSTEM

